



Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

Parent Education Work Group - October 18, 2004 - 10 a.m. 2:30 p.m.

Members Present: Curtis Curry, Barbara Gilkey, Suzann Hernandez, Christine Hickman, Traci Johnston, Martha Reeder, Linda Russell, Paula Watson, and Michelle Wynn.

Agenda Item #1 - Update from August 31, 2004 Meeting and Updates from Grantee Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting

Discussion: Martha distributed the report, "Result of Work Group Sessions - 8-31-04 - AECCS Joint Meeting," to the group. It can be accessed on the website at:

<http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/8-31summary.pdf>.

Since August 31 several work groups have met: Early Care and Education, Family Support, Medical Home, and Social-Emotional Health. This is the last of the next round of meetings. Social-Emotional Health meets again later this week. She noted that the work groups need to be more focused on intersecting with each other. As each group meets, we are beginning to get a better picture of how groups are going to accomplish goals.

Martha mentioned her recent attendance at a meeting of all MCHB groups in Washington, D.C., October 3-6. There was a three-hour period set aside for all Region VI MCHB grantees to meet together. There are a number of grant program in Arkansas that she was unaware of their existence. When she has time, she will be contacting the previously unknown groups to determine if they should be part of this planning process and to determine where they are in their program.

A presentation was made at the Steering Committee (composed of work group co-chairs) on September 16 concerning a resource database operated by the Arkansas Supportive Housing Network. There are two sides to the system. The first is a potential resource for services offered by various agencies/organizations. It is a clearinghouse of resources. Participating agencies must enter their own information into the system (profile, wish list, or volunteer opportunities).

Result: Four main areas of concern emerged from the August 31 meeting that stretched across all five groups, and Martha asked that work groups seek ways to work together with other groups on these concerns:

- Data Sharing
- Access to/Mapping of Resources
- Funding Strategies
- A Prepared Work Force

Agenda Item # 1, Continued - Update from August 31, 2004 Meeting and Updates from Grantee Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting

Discussion: Restrictive usage for confidential information is available. This is a free site for all agencies and can be accessed by other agencies, individuals, etc., seeking information related to a variety of topics important to communities: emergency shelters, food banks, transitional housing, employment opportunities, addiction disorders, day care resources, and counseling, to name a few. There is not necessarily a shared language about defining terms and there are not any sophisticated mechanism to insure resources are reliable, ethical, etc. Web Site: www.araccess.org.

Under the second side to the system under AR Access, there is a fee for a separate service called "Service Point" that allows organizations to store, tract clients, and share data. Agencies can enter into an agreement to share data with other agencies. You can share any data you desire, but it is possible to restrict any part of the data. As more people use the site, the costs for the site may go down. It is partially funded with a grant; the system was set in place by the grant. It is a "sequel-based system" where data can be dumped into it; it is not necessary to re-enter all your data. Agencies may decide "field to field" with whom they want to share information.

Some concerns that were expressed during the Steering Committee meeting related to who is monitoring the site, and is it user friendly.

When applying for grants, you must have the ability to access data to supply "hard" data. There is usually only a month or two to apply for a grant. Must have hard data to prove need and must show trends. You must continually adjust what you are doing depending on data. If there is a solid source of information, it is important to also use for advocacy purposes with the legislature.

DHS has recently designed a new resource called, "e-source." It is managed by the same company. This is a way to have control of what goes into it. Organizations can share information. It is already designed to accommodate a government agency (HUD).

Result:

Agenda Item # 1, Continued - Update from August 31, 2004 Meeting and Updates from Grantee Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting

Discussion: At some point, we (DHS) will be going to agency heads to present a proposal (rather than a complaint). A solid, well-thought out plan must be presented. It needs to be decided what information needs to be share without endangering anyone's confidentiality. A comment was made that this has been on the table before, to integrate services, but when the governor changes, it was not completed. This will lessen the amount of paperwork for all concerned.

Early Childhood Mental Health Project. The Division of Behavioral Health of the Heath Department would like at least one person in every center who specializes in early childhood mental health. They are trying to supply training to centers. There is a pilot project also. There are projects regarding this endeavor in three locations in the state. There are 15 community mental health centers in the state and each center has one mental health specialist for screenings, consultations, etc., on a consistent basis over a three-year period. They are partnered to provide services to up to six early childhood centers. Through this program, they hope to show that it does make a difference. There is an evaluation component to the entire project. There is a need for more funding to put the program on a wider basis.

Early Care and Education is working on a "tiered" system of reimbursement based on the quality of the child care settings. This requires a change in state policies. They are looking at a system of higher standards of quality for a higher reimbursement rate. Quality must be defined. Already in place is the environmental rating scale. A sheet was distributed listing the components of quality. One star means there is basic compliance with the license requirements.

Result: Various persons from different work groups will need to work on topics together related to the four main areas of concern.

To help this group get focused, we need to remember that any intervention that is planned really has to revolve where the children are. Children are (1) Child Development Centers (such as Headstart), (2) Child Care Facilities (private), and (3) Home-In Care. Interventions must be tailored to those settings.

The drop-in meetings were announced for October 19 and 27. People will be able to share their comments related to the tiered system and participate in its development.

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Agenda Item # 2 - Systems Planning and Implementation Strategies

Discussion: Where do parents go to find the services needed? Parents are going to be where their child are located. Child care facilities could be the first point of contact.

Martha shared information about the ABC Program Childcare Readiness Guide (for caregivers) and Calendar (for parents). The calendar focuses on 38 Kindergarten Readiness Indicators. There is a lot of information, but it is dispersed in a contained manner each month. This would represent the parent involvement all packaged into one thing.

Activity. Each person was asked to name one thing to change Parent Education in Arkansas:

- Talk to Children (good communication between parents and children).
- Parents need to be given an opportunity to work on programs to strengthen their families.
- Focus on what "quality" is.
- Focus on "quality." What this means?
- Parents need to understand developmental needs—age related.
- There is a need for parent centers, open in the evenings, with transportation provided if needed, and contact person for every parent.
- Companies should/could train parents that work for them. Companies could bring someone in to talk about parenting, providing job incentives to attend workshops. (suggested pilot project)
- Parents training parents; parents helping parents.
- Approach legislature suggesting parenting classes before leaving high school; it would be nice to include families in this type of training.

Barbara Gilkey passed out two sheets (State of Oregon) related to Parent Education that she received while attending a conference. Information from a North Carolina web site was also distributed. The committee may want to look at a way to get links out more. There is a need to have something that would be easy to find. It needs to "pop-up" according to counties.

Result: The Groups need to identify information they want represented. There's a lot of information already out there. The Calendar and Guide are only examples—there seems to be a need for something like these by Parents.

There will be a conference call this afternoon with two representatives from two other work groups. Each work group has discussed developing a toolkit—Family Support, Medical Home, and Parent Education. The three groups need to work together on a toolkit for families. Each group would address those things that are most important—the information that needs to be shared.

There is a need to develop more than written materials.

Agenda Item # 2 - Systems Planning and Implementation Strategies

Discussion: Question—what can we do that is accomplishable in the next six months? While attending the MCHB grantees meeting, upcoming deadlines were shared. The Implementation Plan is due by January 27, 2005. Most of the planning phase in Arkansas will not be completed by then. It is most likely that Arkansas will apply for another year of planning to continue the development of the master plan. Martha indicated that we will probably follow the original plan and have everything completed by early Summer, 2005. Therefore, there is a need to stay on track (task). This group needs to find the one thing that they feel that can do and make a difference.

There is a need to find out what parent education activities are available in different regions throughout the state.

Result: We need one piece that will increase awareness and utilization. There is a need to develop a more comprehensive plan to increase awareness.

A simple questionnaire was developed that would be easy for centers/individual/groups to respond to find out currently available parent education activities. This information needs to be compiled by April. Agreed that the questionnaire needs to be back in the office by February 15 in order to do any needed follow-up. There is a need to identify as many programs and agencies as possible. County specific information is needed. Barbara will assign counties as needed for follow-up upon return of the survey. DHS worker should be able to help identify churches hospitals, and other private groups.

TASKS:

Curtis agreed to secure a list of County Administrators from Department of County Operations.

Barbara was then to send a letter to the Director of County Operations and request permission to send the survey to all county administrators.

Agenda Item # 3 - Conference Call

Discussion: Conference Call with Cara Walloch (Medical Home) and Jacqueline Gorton (Family Support). The joint toolkit idea was discussed.

Deanna Howell will have someone from Headstart at the next meeting of the Family Support Work Group to discuss the Headstart parent involvement program.

There is a need to hone down and target one particular type of center. Each type of center may need a different toolkit.

Before Family Support can move forward, they want to hear from Headstart.

Martha explained that specifics from each work group need to come from that work group. We must be sure that information is accurate.

Results: All information needs to be in by the middle of February. There may be video tapes included in the kit. It should serve a dual purpose—parents and child care providers.

This group was invited to send a representative to the next Family Support meeting on Tuesday, November 9, 9 -11 a.m. at the Baker Building. Barbara Gilkey will try to attend the meeting on November 9.

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Agenda Item #4 - Next Meeting Date - Adjournment

Discussion: Carolene and others from the Springdale area will be in Little Rock for meetings on December 2. She requested that the next meeting be the afternoon of December 2 or sometime on December 3.

Result: It was decided that the next meeting could be held on December 2 and December 3 would be the best time for the meeting in Little Rock.

TASKS: Barbara to check with Carolene and Martha related to the meeting date.